

# The Right and the Wrong.

A sermon of the famous author of "In His Steps,"—a book whose circulation was over 3,000,000 copies.

By Rev. Charles M. Sheldon.

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"What difference does it make whether Moses wrote the Word of God or whether it was written by some one else?"  
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**M**Y text is from nineteenth verse, thirtieth chapter Deuteronomy: "Therefore, choose life." There are two great fundamental facts in life in this world. One is the power of choice. In the field of character the power of choice stands by itself. It is independent to a great extent of hereditary tendency. How many of you who did wrong during the past week were conscious at the time that the power of choosing whether you should do

right or wrong rested with you? I think every one of you. You can all say, "I need not have chosen to do wrong; I might have chosen to do right." Every one in this congregation who did something that his conscience knew was wrong was aware that the power of choice lay with him and that he could do right if he so desired. A man whose life is devoted to work among criminals, who has visited all the great prisons and jails and has met nearly all the criminals in them, says that a vast majority of those criminals had enough strength within them to do right instead of wrong. They themselves felt that they had this power, and when frank with themselves said so.

When we are tempted to do wrong it is another wrong to make hereditary tendency the scapegoat for our misdeeds. Bishop Vincent says there is nothing we inherit from our fathers which is too strong for us to bear against. I do not deny the existence of hereditary tendencies, but I do deny their importance. The boy resembles the father. Habits are handed down from father to son, a fact that is spoken of in the Bible. But no man inherits from his father anything that deprives him of the power to choose between good and evil. Even if you were all heathens you would still possess this power.

In his daily life a man is often surrounded by persons who do not help him to do right. Sometimes they belong to his own family circle. But although they do not aid him to a righteous career, they cannot make him do wrong. He has the power of choice, no matter what the surroundings or the circumstances or the heredity. Every man knows that he has this power. Nothing can take it away from him. Jesus always spoke in the imperative mood. He said, "Do it," or "Thou shalt," knowing that the man was a law unto himself and could do it or not as he chose.

In making his choice man can select only one of two things: right or wrong, life or death. People are always trying to compromise between life and death and right and wrong, but no man ever succeeded. The first fruit of attempted compromise is indifference. If a man does not make a direct choice between right and wrong he soon becomes careless about his way of life.

The second result of indifference is failure to select between right and wrong is doubt. The indifferent man speculates as to who really wrote the Word of God. "Did Moses write it?" he asks, "or did some one else? Was Jonah a fact or a fiction? Can I believe in a miracle?" Now, what difference does it make to us whether Moses wrote the Word of God or whether it was written by some one else? There it is in all its grandeur; of what importance is it who wrote it?

# The Decay of Our Government.

By George D. Herron.

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"It is well for those who cry aloud at the shame of France to see if there be like guilt upon us!"  
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**F**RANCE is in disgrace, and the world looks on in wonder at her shamelessness. To Anglo-Saxon and German peoples it seems impossible and unthinkable that Captain Dreyfus should again be condemned, wantonly and openly, without a syllable of evidence against him. The world does not believe the condemned man guilty of treason. He is manifestly a pure and ardent patriot, nobly loving the country to which he has never been other than nobly loyal. Nor does France believe him guilty. There was no pretence at the last that Captain Dreyfus was being tried for treason. He was simply taken through a monstrous process of condemnation, demanded by the ruling classes and the crazed populace, on the grounds of public expediency. In part, his "conviction" was due to the fact that he was a Jew, although a large part of the population of Southern France has Jewish blood in its veins, and to this blood owes much of its sobriety and integrity. But likely Captain Dreyfus would have been condemned, under the circumstances, if he had been no Jew, although the race passions of the people would

not have been enlisted against his liberty. He was condemned "for the honor of the army." But it is well for those of us who cry aloud at the shame of France to examine the spiritual principle involved in the condemnation of Captain Dreyfus and see if there be like guilt upon us as nations, classes or individuals. There are no degrees in a wrong principle, however the variance and degree of flagrant in its manifestations. The evil principle here involved is that whatever defends existing institutions, or an existing mode of power, or an existing class of party, or an existing religious doctrine, is right, or at least justifiable.

The principle takes root in the existence of power over one class by another class; or of one individual over another. No individual can exercise arbitrary power over another without spiritual destruction to both. No class can rule another class, no government merely rule the peoples, no nation rule another nation, without rulers and the ruled being destroyed in the end. The possession of power over others is inherently immoral because spiritually monopolistic. It is an evil tree that can bring forth only corrupt fruit. A ruling class can never be other than a predatory or marauding class, corrupting and betraying the nation.

The corruption that inheres in the possession of power is manifest in the present decay of representative government. To begin with, the people had no business delegating their legislative power to representatives. Representative government is not self-government, not democracy, but rather a giving up of pure democracy as impracticable. The New England town meeting, in which our institutions began, was a pure democracy. But our institutions were finally organized to prevent direct self-government.

The Constitution of the United States was constructed, under the influence of Hamilton, as an avowed device to keep the people from governing themselves, and it is succeeding most perfectly. It was intended to keep the people subject to the property classes; to keep the living present under the rule of the dead past. Our institutions are representative but not democratic. And representative government will never be other than oligarchic. Tyranny and corruption inheres in the delegation of the power that belongs to the people.

We are to blame for our tyrants and corruptions, because we are too selfish and morally indolent, too greedy and cowardly, to govern ourselves. We must have masters if we will not be brothers. And, as De Tocqueville prophesied, we are now in bondage to the worst and most degrading of all masters—plutocracy. Our legislatures and congresses have degenerated into ignorant, insolent and ruffian mobs of plutocratic retainers. Our highest governmental officials are vassals of this plutocracy. We are governed by private corporations for private gain. The people have no government. If they will not govern themselves, they deserve the degradation and tyranny of plutocratic government. Either the people must be the government or they will be devastated by a ruling class.

# A Letter to Husbands.

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

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"When you come to sift the whole chaff of existence everything goes to the winds excepting the happiness you have at home."  
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**N**OT many weeks ago a tired little woman committed suicide because her husband scolded her. He came home late at night and found her employed in labor which seemed to him suitable for the morning hours, and he spoke angrily about her tardy habits. She flung herself from the window and died in the hospital soon afterward.

There had been scolding after scolding without doubt. She had been found fault with for so many derelictions, for so many deeds done and undone, that this final criticism was merely the last straw on the camel's back. A cross, fault-finding wife is a terrible being. But a man can take his hat and go to the club, to the corner grocery, or to the saloon when her tongue becomes too aggressive.

When the husband comes home and scolds the air of the house blue, there is nothing for a wife to do but submit or jump out of the window. The wife who died in the hospital the other day had submitted for many years, undoubtedly; and then, finding that submission did not better matters, she tried the window act. It would have been wiser to walk out at the door. It is more discreet to go into the highways of earth uninvited than to force an entrance into the mysterious realm of death.

The man or woman who commits suicide is a spiritual pauper. He who has spiritual strength knows he will be aided to the end, and waits his call. But the spiritual pauper declares himself a bankrupt when he ends his own earth existence.

We know there are homes for paupers in this world. We do not know what provision is made for them in the next. It is always well to go into a new land with a full purse; and it is well to enter the next world with a good supply of spiritual wealth, and not as a bankrupt.

Meantime there is the scolding husband to carry his remorseful heart through life. It is good enough for him, and yet we cannot help pitying him. He is so sorry he said what he did. He never dreamed she would take it so to heart. He would give all he possesses to go back and live that night over, and do, oh, so differently! He would understand her so much better, and be so much better, if she were alive to-day.

# Mr. Dooley Hears Gen. "Merceer."

By F. Peter Dunne.

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"Gin'ral Merceer, stand beside this witness. Now both speak at waunst. Anybody else that has anything to say lave him say it now, so it won't be heard."  
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**I**T was about this time, or some years later," continues Gin'ral Merceer, "that I received ividence iv th' Cap's guilt. I made it ivest. It was a letter written be me fr'm th' Cap. to a German grocer askin' fr' twenty rounds iv sausage. (Turnmoll in th' Court.) It was impossible, mon colonel, that this bere letter cud have been written be Estherhazy. In th' first place he was in Paris at th' time; in th' second place he was in London. Th' letter is not in his handwritin', but in th' handwritin' iv Col. Pat th' Cham. Thin again I wrote th' letter meself. Thin who cud ve written it? It must iv been Cap. Dhryfuss. (Cheers fr'm the Court.) I give me reasons as they

occurred to me: First, th' Armeenyan athrocity; second, th' risignation iv Gin'ral Alger; third, th' marriage iv Prince Lobengula; fourth, th' scarcity iv sarvint girls in th' suburban towns; fifth, th' price iv gas. (Cries iv "Abase th' price iv gas.")

Cap. Dhryfuss was settin' on th' window-sill whistlin' "Garry Owen" an' makin' faces at th' gallant correspondint iv th' Daily Wrongs iv Man. At this point he cried out, laughingly: "I will not contrahdict th' gin'ral. I will say he lies. I saw th' letter meself an' that man was Estherhazy." (Sensation.)

"Let me ask this canal iv a Jew a question," says th' correspondint iv th' evening Rothscheeld Roaster, a Fr-rinchman be th' name iv Sol Levi.

"Ask it!" says Cap. Dhryfuss.

"You are a despicable traitor," says th' gallant correspondint. (Sensation.)



"I was not speekin' iv th' Dhryfuss case."

"Don't dare to mention that matter in this court," says th' president. "I'm surprised a man iv ye're intelligence'd thry to dhrag in extrahnyous matther, whin th' honor iv th' ar-my is at stake!"

"I thought it was a thrille," says th' Cap., but be th' number iv vet'ran journalists here it must be th' openin' iv a new hotel."

"Cap," says th' president, "what ye got to say to this? Did ye write th' letter?"

"I did," says th' Cap.

"Throw it out, thin," says th' president.

"We must be guided be th' laws iv ividence. Th' witness will confine himself to forgeries. Have ye e'er a forgery about ye'er clothes, mon Gin'ral?"

"I wish to confront th' witness," says Mat-ther Blamange.

"Set down!" says th' president.

"D'ye raymimber meetin' me at dinner at Moosoo de Bozoo's? It was years ago, durin' th' time iv Napoleon, before th' big fire. If I raymimber r-right we had peas. Wasn't it a lovely night? Oh dear, oh dear, gentlemen iv th' press an' mon President, ye ought to have been there. Well, I says to Gin'ral Blotot, I says: 'Gin'ral, I says, 'how ar ye annyhow?' An' th' Gin'ral replies: 'Fr an ol' man, well, I made up me mind thin that th' Cap. was innocent, an' this was before he was born."

"Me distinguished colleague in th' thrille iv this case, th' editor iv wan iv th' Paris papers," says th' president, "has received a letter fr'm th' military attachay or spy iv th' Impro-